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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: (U) KURD TOILERS PARTY SEEKS USG INTERVENTION

REF: A) KIRKUK 22, B) KIRKUK 7

CLASSIFIED BY: Scott Dean, Regional Coordinator (Acting), Reo  
Kirkuk, Department of State .

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (SBU) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: On February 7, RC(A) met with Qadr Aziz, the General Secretary of the Kurdistan Toilers Party, a secular, left-leaning Kurdish party that participated in the December legislative elections as a member of the Kurdish Alliance with the dominant Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Qadr asked for the U.S. to intervene in Kurdistan Regional Government to combat growing corruption, which he claimed many Kurds blamed on the U.S., and help smaller parties play their rightful role. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

(SBU) U.S. SHOULD INTERVENE  
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12. (SBU) On democratization and corruption, Qadr said:

-- Corruption is spreading throughout the government of Kurdistan. Many Kurds blame the Americans for this because they see that U.S. support for the KDP and PUK does not seem to be conditioned on the parties' reducing corruption.

-- Many Kurds are worried that the U.S. will not push for democratic reform in Kurdistan. Many note with concern that the U.S. is involving itself in the creation of the government in Baghdad but not of the unified Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The U.S. is thus at fault when we see 30-year sentences in Kurdistan [for criticizing the government](reftels).

-- U.S. involvement in the KRG would be beneficial and would help smaller parties and NGO's play their rightful role. The U.S. should push for a more powerful role for the Kurdistan National Assembly, freedom of speech and "real democracy" in Kurdistan.

-- Despite Kurdistan's progress since 1991 (and 2003), the ruling parties have not won the people's support because of their corruption.

(SBU) UNIFICATION DEAL MAY BE OFF IF TALABANI NOT PRESIDENT  
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13. (SBU) On unification of the two Kurdistan regional governments, Qadr said:

-- Unification is a positive step but the people are not very

excited about it because they are cynical about the ruling parties' intentions.

-- Unification was necessary in part because Baghdad would only fund one regional Kurdish government, not two. Unification would be easy if the KDP and PUK were not so political and distrustful of each other.

-- However, the current division of top jobs between KDP and PUK leaders in the unified government is predicated on Talabani's remaining president of Iraq. If that does not happen, then the unification deal could be in jeopardy.

-- The Toilers Party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan Socialist Party and the Kurdistan Islamic Group met recently to discuss their role in the unified KRG. "We do not want to be in government only as window dressing to 'prove' that the new KRG is democratic." Before, the Toilers Party held the ministries of Culture and Transport. Now they are only offering us "Ministers of the Region" (i.e., Ministers without Portfolio).

(U) COMMENT

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14. (C) Qadr, as is typical of leaders of small parties that feel disadvantaged in the struggle for power here, is trying to draw the U.S. in to help solve their problems. His claim that many Kurds blame us for Kurdistan's extensive corruption should be seen in that light, i.e., "you must help clean up the KRG before your reputation suffers greater damage." Despite his self interest in American involvement, we have heard other Kurds do blame the omnipotent Americans for not having democratized the KRG by now.

DEAN